

CASE STUDY

Bridging the Gender Gap

Introduction

It's clear that Rhonda Carpenter-Powell is the beating heart behind Forest Park High School's growing computer science program. She is known district-wide for her passion and dedication to introducing all students in Clayton County to programming, especially females.

Like many new computer science teachers, Rhonda had no previous programming experience before becoming a high school computer science teacher. Her background is in business and information technology. After graduating from St. Paul's University, Rhonda taught college-level business classes and later worked for the Department of Correctional Education where she taught inmates basic computer skills (eg. microsoft office).

Life circumstances led Rhonda and her daughter to Clayton County, Georgia where she was offered a teaching position at Forest Park High School. Rhonda would be building the (new) Programming Pathway. This was an exciting opportunity knowing she'd have the ability to make it her own! But she wondered where to begin...



“ I didn't know anything about programming until I was told that I had to teach it. Once I started looking into it and playing with CodeHS, it really was interesting to me!

- Rhonda Carpenter-Powell

CodeHS quickly became a valuable free resource, as Rhonda built out the what would soon become a high-quality computer science program. In the beginning, she went through the CodeHS curriculum to explore it herself because Rhonda knew if she wasn't interested and excited about the content, her student's wouldn't be either.

Case Study Fast Facts

Teacher

Rhonda Carpenter-Powell

School

Forest Park High School, Georgia

Courses Taught

- IDT
- AP CSP
- Web Design
- Mobile Apps
- Video Game Design
- Java

Number of Students

28

Years Teaching CS

6

Fast Forward 6 Years

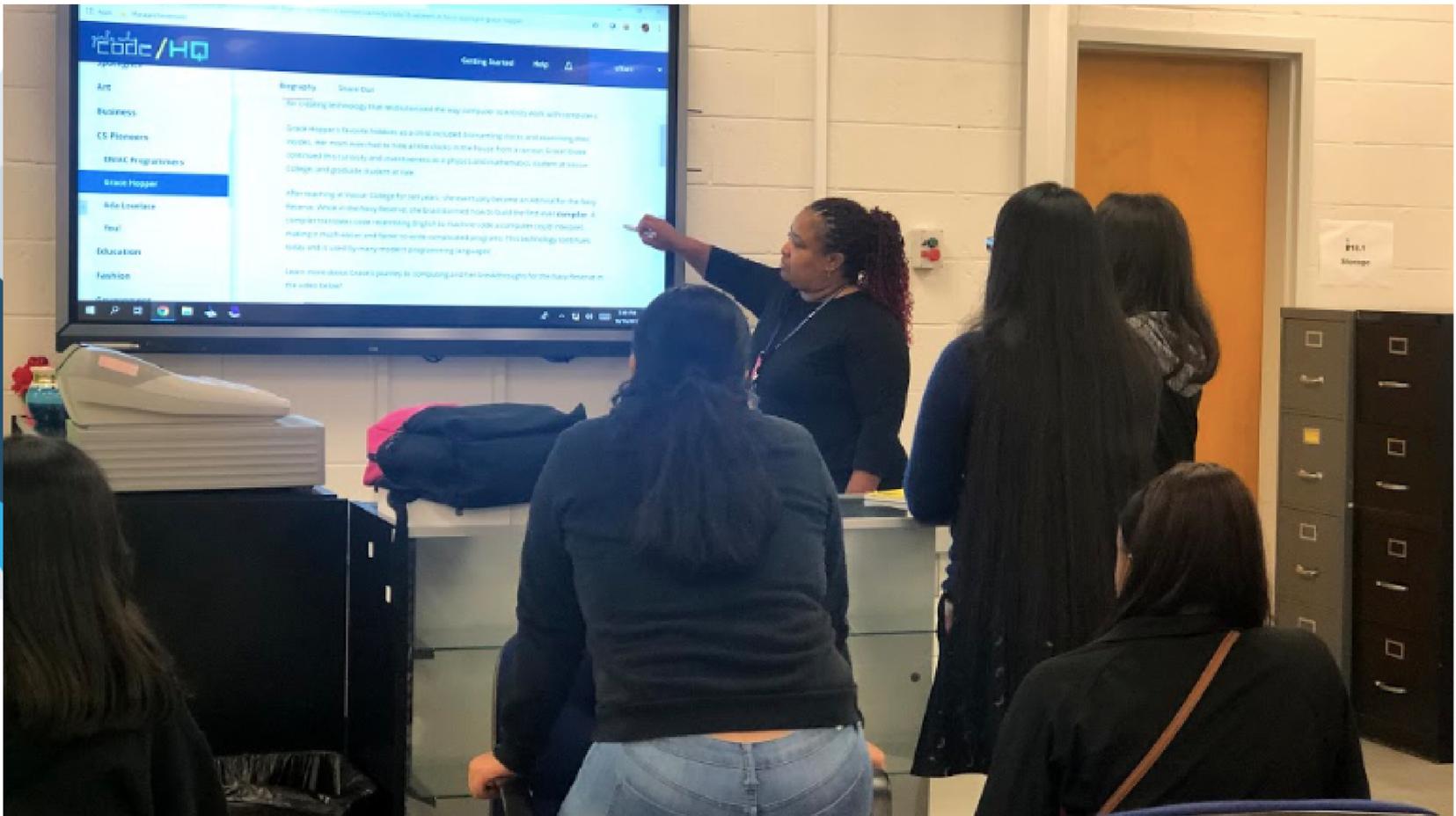
Rhonda now teaches 6 classes a day with 28 students and runs an after school Girls Who Code Club. Her class load includes IDT, AP CSP, Web Design, Mobile Apps, Video Game Design, and Java. The majority of students are Asian and Hispanic males, however, the number of females is steadily increasing.

“ I want to be a programmer because I know there are not a lot of females in the industry.

- Female Student from Forest Park High School

Rhonda uses the Girls Who Code club to help introduce more females at her school to computer science. The club started with only a handful of girls and is now up to 15! The girls in her club really connect with other girls and encourage them to join by word-of-mouth or hosting informational meetings. Rhonda will be the first to tell you that the girls really make it happen

The Girls Who Code club challenges her students while still giving them a safe space and opportunity to explore a subject they might otherwise not try on their own. It gives females an outlet to ask questions and not feel intimidated by male peers.



It's true that even in today's world there is still disparity with gender inequality, especially in a male-dominated space like STEM. Rhonda is doing her part in Clayton County to bridge this gender gap in computer science for future generations.

We can't wait to see what she does next!

